

Do Good Clothes Help?

By H. ADDINGTON BRUCE

A GOOD many years ago there arrived in Boston a young man whose total capital to begin business life was less than five dollars. Naturally, this did not carry him far, but it did carry him to a position as oyster-opener in a little all-night restaurant. Here he made the acquaintance of a "night hawk" cab-driver, who became very friendly with him and promised that he would "tip him off" to a better paying place at the first opportunity.

One night the friendly cabby gave him the news he had been anxiously awaiting.

"I've got another job for you," he announced. "They want a man behind the bar at a hotel where I have lots of friends. The job is yours for the asking." And he named one of Boston's leading hotels.

The young oyster-opener handed in his resignation, and hurried around to the hotel. The hotel manager, after one cold, appraising glance, curtly told him:

"I've got nothing for you. Yes, a man was wanted; but we don't want anybody now."

Borrows Sunday Suit

IT took the over-confident young man nearly a month to get back his too hastily resigned place in the restaurant. Meantime, if hungry and homeless, he used his eyes and ears and his mind to good advantage. Accordingly, when the cab driver a little later informed him again that a man was wanted at the hotel where he had already applied vainly, he did not rashly resign the place he held. Instead, he asked for a night off, and hunted up an acquaintance, a man of about his own build, but more prosperous.

"Jack," he said, "I want you to lend me your Sunday clothes, walking-stick and all."

Next morning, after a good night's sleep, well shaved, and dressed better than he had ever been before, he called once more on the hotel manager. The latter, needless to say, did not recognize him.

Politely he inquired what he could do for the well dressed stranger, listened attentively to his application, and expressed regret that he had nothing suitable to offer him.

"But," persisted the applicant, "I understand that you want a man behind the bar."

"That is true. But it is not a place that would suit you. What we want is a man to clean glasses and get rid of empty bottles."

"I'll take that place. When shall I begin work?"

This, I say, happened in Boston a good many years ago. As time passed, the young man prospered until, long before his death, he was the owner of several big hotels. One of these was the very hotel where he had begun work as a glass-washer. You may be sure he never forgot that he owed his start in the hotel business to the wearing of a good—if borrowed—suit of clothes.

And, as an episode from real life of a directly contrasting sort, glance at this: In a Springfield, Massachusetts, dry-



"I've got another job for you," announced the friendly cabby.

goods store two traveling salesmen were paying a morning call on the head of the firm. One had been with him for perhaps ten minutes, and was evidently having a hard time trying to book an order for the spools and other small goods he carried. The other salesman, a representative of a silk manufacturing company in Maine, sat composedly awaiting his turn, a dignified, well groomed figure of a man.

He had not long to wait. At his entrance the dry-goods merchant had looked up with a cordial smile of greeting and the remark:

"Glad to see you, Mr. Woods. I'll be ready for you in a moment."

He was as good as his word, despite the almost pathetic efforts of the first salesman to hold his attention.

"No," the merchant told him; "I don't care to order anything this morning. I'm sorry; but I'm pretty well stocked up."

As the disappointed salesman left the store, the merchant gazed after his retreating form, and, as he gazed, frowned slightly. Then he turned to the man from Maine.

"Do you know that fellow?" he inquired.

"I can't exactly say that I know him. I've run across him on the road a few times."

"Well," the merchant's frown deepened, "he's not a bad sort. If only he'd wear decent clothes, keep them brushed, and change his linen oftener, I think he'd do some real business."

Clothes Affect the Man

HERE are two instances of the truth that a man's career is influenced for good or for evil by the kind of clothes he wears and the way he wears them. Nor is it only because others are prone to judge us from external appearances that the question of clothes is of great importance. Of even greater significance is the fact that clothes directly and indirectly affect the character of their wearer; so that a man can actually increase or decrease his mental and moral powers by the way he dresses.

Some day—may it be in the not distant future—a new profession will be established, the profession of scientific repairer of damaged characters. This scientific character-builder will be sure to have a good deal to say on the subject of clothes to those who apply to him for advice. Suppose the unsuccessful salesman of our second instance, realizing that something was wrong with him, sought the character-builder's aid, this is about what he would be told:

"It will, of course, take time to find out exactly what you lack. We shall have to inquire into your heredity, early history, personal habits, general outlook on life, and the state of your physical health. But there is one thing I can tell you off-hand. If you wish to make more of yourself, it will be wise for you to dress better than you now do."

"You quite evidently, like a good many other men, are not over-particular as to the fit and general appearance of your clothes. Baggy trousers, and loose, ill-fitting, somewhat dusty coat suggest unmistakably that your habits of thought as well as your habits of dress are a trifle disorderly and slovenly. It is a safe wager that inaccuracy and inattention to detail are characteristic of you. This is fatal to business success. Make it a practice to give some thought to the details of your

personal appearance, and you will gradually develop more orderly and efficient ways of thinking about the work you have to do.

"Be careful not to go to the opposite extreme of wearing clothes that fit too well.

Men Shouldn't Lace

"TIGHT coats and waistcoats interfere with breathing; tight trousers act unfavorably on the digestion; and tight shoes, besides disturbing circulation and causing muscular and nervous strain, make one disinclined to take physical exercise. The result of all this is an impoverishing, even a poisoning, of the blood supply to the brain. Consequently, if you wish to do better work and lead a morally stronger life, it is imperative for you to reduce the pressure on chest, abdomen, and feet.

"The consciousness of being poorly dressed has a profoundly disturbing psychic effect, whereas the consciousness of being well dressed has a vitalizing effect."

That good clothes do indeed have a developmental value, through their psychic influences on the wearer, has been strikingly exemplified in life experiences time and again. A particularly interesting case in point recurs to my mind. It concerns a young man from a Western State who came to Harvard University as a post-graduate student.

It was necessary for him to do outside work, and to be as economical as possible. As one means to this end he hit on the ingenious scheme of persuading a tailor to make him clothes at a nominal price, in consideration of his promising to recommend the tailor to fellow students.

As may be imagined, the tailor saw to it that this clever young man was well dressed. The result was that, as far as externals went, the tailor worked a veritable transformation in him, changing him from an uncouth, awkward-looking youth to one of the best dressed men at Harvard.

His Costumes Change His Customs

THIS young man had been rather abrupt and self-centered in his manner. Now he became noticeably courteous and considerate of others. He made it his custom to use the choicest of language, whereas before he had been careless in this important respect. In other ways his personality expanded and grew more attractive. Students who before had not given him a moment's thought, began to cultivate his acquaintance. He was spoken of flatteringly by members of the faculty. And, before his first year at Harvard ended, he had been appointed to a secretaryship in one of the college departments.

To be sure, clothes alone do not account for this young man's success. He must have had some striking personal qualities before he went to the accommodating tailor. But the point is that the clothes he wore, besides prepossessing other people in his favor, did play a decisive part in bringing out these qualities. As a shabbily dressed man he would not only have been less successful; he would have been handicapped in the important points of self-expression and self-realization.

Even a single detail in one's clothing may have far-reaching developmental consequences, either by affecting the mind directly, or by affecting it through affecting the bodily condition. In New York City there used to be—perhaps there still is—a refuge maintained by philanthropists for the redemption of tramps, drunkards, and other human derelicts. Religious influences were brought to bear on these; but also the attempt was made to give them moral stamina by exceedingly practical measures. Among these measures was the hiring of a cobbler to put good heels on the shoes of the unfortunates who came to the institution.

The theory was that if their heels were mended they would stand straighter physically than they had done before, and that with the improvement in posture brought about by this simple device there would be a gain in moral strength. The actual results vindicated this theory. The

men whose heels were repaired showed greater readiness to respond to good advice. They found it easier to assert their will-power. They were, that is to say, much more like real men than they had been when they first shuffled through the doors of the refuge.

Are the heels of your own shoes worn down, my reader? Have them mended. Do you let dust accumulate on shoes, trousers, coat? It is a success-hindering habit. Are you careless about the state of your linen? Become careful.

And how about your suits of clothes? Are they of good fabric, of good cut, and neatly pressed? See to it that they are. For of a surety it will pay you to be well dressed.

And by well dressed I mean, of course, dressed in good taste. Freakish and "loud" clothing is almost as disastrous to a man as shabby clothing.

"Neat But Not Gaudy"

INTO the office of a banker there walked one morning a man who had an important business proposal to make. It was a project of such importance that he wished to discuss it in detail. And it was a project in which he could reasonably expect the banker to be interested. But after he had talked a few minutes, the banker began drumming nervously on his desk. He was no longer listening to his caller's story. His attention was held by the caller's conspicuously patterned suit, and flaming red necktie with obtrusive stick-pin.

Presently the telephone rang. It was to announce another caller.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Roe," said the banker, looking up at the first caller, "but a gentleman is here whose business requires my immediate attention. I must ask you to excuse me."

The two callers passed each other at the door of the office. Said the banker to the newcomer:

"I never was so glad to see you, John. I was wondering how in the world to get rid of him. Couldn't you feel his clothes?"

Neither shabbily nor in fantastic manner, that must be your rule in dressing, if you would have your clothes aid you in achieving success. Dress, in short, according to the maxim of a friend of mine, formerly treasurer of one of the biggest ammunition companies in the United States:

"That man is really well dressed who is so dressed that, after he has left you, it will be difficult for you to recall just what his clothes looked like."



Tight shoes make you dislike physical exercise.



Give thought to the details of your appearance.



He persuaded the tailor to make his clothes at a nominal price.